

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 03117 070553Z

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8671

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E.O. 11652 : NA

TAGS : BEXP, NI

SUBJ : LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

REF : STATE 052223

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES USG SUPPORT FOR AND PARTICIPATION IN LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR, PLANNED FOR LATE 1976, HAS TO BE PRIORITY TARGET FOR OUR FY 77 PROGRAM. WHATEVER ITS SHORT-RUN COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL AND THERE ARE REASONS THINK IT WILL BE CONSIDERABLE (EVEN IF LESS THAN U.S. SOLO EXHIBIT), WE BELIEVE PARTICIPATION WILL BE IWPNTO OUR LONGER RUN EAE IN NIGERIA.

2. ALTHOUGH DETAILS FMG ARRANGEMENTS STILL LACKING, IT IS APPARENT FROM SCOPE OF TRADE FAIR COMPLEX, ALREADY UNDER CONSTRUCTION, THAT FMG PLANS IMPRESSIVE EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE NIGERIA'S ENERGENN MAJOR TRADING NATION. SO FAR AS WE KNOWN, MAJOR STATES IN EUROPE ARE ALREADY MAKING PLANS TO TAKE PART.

3. IRRESPECTIVE OF SHORT-RUN SALES RESULTS, FAIR OFFERS U.S. TIMELY OPPORTUNITY BRING HOME TO NIGERIAN BUSINESSMEN AT FIRST HAND THEME OF U.S. INDUSTRY'S CAPABILITIES AND DEMONSTRATE TO THEM U.S. INDUSTRY'S AST IN NIGERIAN MARKET. FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW FAIR CAN TAKE U.S. INDUSTRY LONG WAY TOWARD CATCHING UP WITH HEAD START THAT EUROPEAN FIRMS HAVE HAD IN NIGERIA REASON OF THEIR EARLIER ARRIVAL AND MORE PERVERSIVE PRESENCE. THIS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 03117 070553Z

CONTEXT AMBITIOUS THIRD DEVEOPMENT PLAN JUST LAUNCHED.

4. FMG WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY VIEW FOREIGN GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN FAIR AS TEST OF INTEREST IN AND COMMITMENT TO NIGERIAN DEVELOPMENT. FAIRLURE OF USG (OR ANY IMPORTANT FOREIGN GOVERNMENT) TO TAKE PART WOULD IMPOSE A CHILL ON FMG ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR ENSUING TRADE PROMOTION EFFORTS; AND IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT FMG'S INFLUENCE PERVADES MOST ASPECTS OF NIGERIAN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND ALSO THAT FMG AND ITS AGENCIES ARE IN FRONT RANK OF PURCHASERS OF FOREIGN EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES.

5. IN POLITICAL CONTEXT, USG FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE WOULD INEVITABLY BE INTERPRETED AS ONE MORE SIGNIFICANT INDICATION OF U.S. INDIFFERENCE TO NIGERIAN ASPIRATIONS AND CONCERNS.

6. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING SHORT-RUN COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL OF LAGOS FAIR WITH MR. T. FIEDLER OF COMMERCE IN COMING WEEKS AND WILL REPORT FURTHER ON THIS ASPECT.

7. WE WILL ALSO REPORT ON PLAN FOR FAIR ITSELF IN GREATER DETAIL AS THESE BECOME AVAILABLE. IT IS NOT TOO SOON, HOWEVER, FOR USG TO FOCUS ONER RUN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF FAIR IN CONTEXT THIRD DEVELOPMENT PLAN, ON NEED TO ADVANCE U.S. INDUSTRY INTEREST IN NIGERIA IN COMPETITION WITH EUROPEAN COMPETITORS, AND ON SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN USG DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN LAGOS FAIR.

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